

Silicon Valley Members Salute Passage of Key Innovation Bill

America COMPETES Act Enables U.S. to Meet Global Economic Challenges

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Silicon Valley Representatives Anna G. Eshoo, Zoe Lofgren and Mike Honda joined together in saluting final House passage of legislation making major investments in education, science and technology to ensure America's global economic competitiveness for generations to come.

The House voted 367 to 57 to approve the conference report on H.R. 2272, the America COMPETES Act of 2007. The legislation implements key elements of House Democrats' Innovation Agenda: A Commitment to Competitiveness, a set of policy proposals developed as a result of extensive consultations and meetings with industry and academic leaders across the country that began in September 2005 at Stanford University.

"Americans have always accepted it as an article of faith that the United States leads the world in invention, ingenuity, and innovation," said Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-Palo Alto, a member of the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet. "But our nation is in serious danger of failing behind our global competitors in the critical fields of innovation and technology. This legislation boldly responds to the challenges we face with investments that will lay the groundwork for regaining our economic footing and ensuring that the 21st Century is an American Century."

"As one of the Members who originally worked with Speaker Pelosi to draft the precursor to today's bill, The Innovation Agenda, I'm delighted to see H.R. 2272 pass," noted Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-San Jose, a member of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Courts, the Internet, and Intellectual Property. "I salute Speaker Pelosi for her outstanding dedication to these issues and leadership that has brought us to this point today. The effort to craft The Innovation Agenda, and now pass the H.R. 2272 conference report today, is a bold response to the global economic challenges our country faces. And, I know that my Silicon Valley district will enthusiastically employ the tools and investments put forth in this bill to help ensure that America remains the most competitive and innovative nation in the world."

Rep. Mike Honda, D-San Jose, a member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and Science and the Committee on Science and Technology Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation, noted, "H.R. 2272 will provide America's next generation of innovators the tools they need to keep America the world leader in science and technology. At an innovation summit I hosted in San Jose, the participants emphasized America's unique 'outside of the box' approach to innovation which has enabled us to become world technology leaders. I am pleased that the conference report includes a provision I authored that will help us learn about the traits of particularly innovative people and to 'teach innovation' as we carry out the Democrats' Innovation Agenda."

The America COMPETES Act ensures that American students, teachers, businesses, and workers are prepared to continue leading the world in innovation, research and technology. The legislation:

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Invests in 25,000 new teachers and ensures more highly qualified teachers in math, science, engineering, technology and foreign languages.

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Doubles authorized funding for the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), and the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP).

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Establishes the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Energy (ARPA-E) to nurture innovation in energy research.

Senate approval of the Conference Report, expected this week, will send H.R. 2272 to the President for his signature. This legislation is supported by numerous groups and companies, including: the Association of American Universities (AAU), the Business Roundtable, the Business Software Alliance (BSA), the Electronic Industries Alliance (EIA), IBM, the Information Technology Association of America (ITAA), Symantec, TechNet, and Technology CEOs Council.

Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren is serving her seventh term in Congress representing most of the City of San Jose and Santa Clara County. She serves as Chair of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law. She also Chairs the House Administration Subcommittee on Elections and serves on the House Homeland Security Committee. Congresswoman Lofgren is Chair of the California Democratic Congressional Delegation consisting of 34 Democratic members of the U.S. House of Representatives from California.